



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1301.0 - Year Book Australia, 1909

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 01/01/1908

This page was updated on 23 Nov 2012 to include the disclaimer below. No other content in this article was affected.

DISCLAIMER:

Users are warned that historic issues of this publication may contain language or views which, reflecting the authors' attitudes or that of the period in which the item was written, may be considered to be inappropriate or offensive today.

MILITARY SYSTEM IN AUSTRALIA PRIOR TO FEDERATION

1. HISTORICAL OUTLINE

(i.) **Introductory.** For many years after the establishment of colonies in Australia, there was no military training of the general body of citizens, nor even of a selection from out that body, as is the case today. Military needs up to 1870, viz., for fifteen years after the grant of responsible government, were met by detachments of Imperial troops. Colonists, however, had not left out of consideration the need for an efficient system of self-defence, and the early establishment of volunteer forces in times of emergency and stress, have now found fruition under the Commonwealth, since the aim of Australians is to make the continent self-contained in the matter of defence.

(ii.) **New South Wales.** Until the year 1870 the main defence of Australia consisted of the garrisons of British troops quartered in the leading cities. In the convict days the Imperial soldiery was maintained principally as a convict guard, and for policing the penal settlements. In 1801 a corps of volunteers, designated the "Loyal Association," was formed, in response to an invitation from the Governor, from among the settlers and the civil officials, to meet any French attack upon the colonies, the possibility of which was suggested by the frequent rumours of war between France and England. The members of the association were generally victualled at the public cost.

In 1808, the strength of the New South Wales corps being then 569 of all ranks, news reached the colony that war had been declared. The Governor summoned the inhabitants to a muster, and a defence corps, for service in case of invasion, was raised.

The period of the Napoleonic wars was one of alertness in the colony, but with the cessation of hostilities, the active service of the volunteers seems to have come to an end. In 1854, the year of the Russian war, a volunteer force was enrolled in Sydney, under the authority of the Act 18 Vict. No. 8. This corps consisted originally of one troop of cavalry, one battery of artillery, and six companies of foot, called the 1st Regiment of New South Wales Rifles; but with the termination of the Crimean war, the volunteers practically ceased to exist. A second force was enrolled in 1860, consisting of one troop of mounted rifles, three batteries of artillery, and twenty companies of infantry, with a total strength of 1700. In 1862 the Mounted Rifles gave place to more artillery. In 1868 the military force was reorganised under the Volunteer Regulation Act of 1867, a grant of 50 acres of land being given for five years' efficient service. Under this enactment a large force was maintained. 1870 saw the withdrawal of the Imperial troops. "Regular" troops were not immediately raised, and for some months the responsibility for home defence rested upon the

volunteers. In 1870 a regular defence force was enrolled, comprising one battery of artillery and two companies of infantry. In the following year the latter were disbanded. In 1874 the land orders for volunteers were abolished, and a direct system of "partial payment" introduced. In 1876 the "permanent" artillery was strengthened by a second battery, and in the following year by a third. 1877 saw the augmentation of the Engineers' Corps, established as a "volunteer" body 10 years earlier, by a torpedo and signalling corps; in 1890 a second field company was added. In 1878 a further reorganisation of the volunteers took place. In 1881 the Commissariat and Transport Corps was raised, designated Army Service Corps later. The Act of 1867, as amended in 1878, continued in force till the transfer of the troops to the Commonwealth. A corps of naval artillery volunteers was raised in 1882, and was followed a few years later by numerous bodies of military reserves, of all the principal arms; but all these "volunteers" were gradually disbanded, or merged in the "partially-paid" forces.

The cavalry regiment, known as the N.S.W. Lancers, was first raised in 1885 as a volunteer reserve corps, under the name of the Light Horse; but in 1888 the men were merged in the "partially-paid" troops, under their present designation. They provided their own horses and equipment - uniform and arms being supplied by the Government. Unlike the Lancers, the Mounted Rifles were directly enrolled in 1889 as a "partially paid" body, and were strengthened by the inclusion of a large part of the Light Horse. An unpaid reserve of four batteries of field and garrison artillery was raised in 1885, but two of these were disbanded in 1892, and the others merged in the "partially-paid" force forming a second field battery. Unpaid infantry reserves were also raised in 1885. These were gradually weakened, and many of the men were formed into reserve rifle companies, the remainder in 1892 being absorbed by the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th regiments, whose establishments were at the same time raised from eight to ten companies. At the end of the same year the rifle companies were disbanded, and civilian rifle clubs formed.

The "permanent" force was extended in 1888 to include corps of submarine miners and mounted infantry; but the latter ceased to exist in 1890, and a fourth battery was added to the artillery, while in the following year a "permanent" medical staff corps evolved out of the "volunteer" army medical corps, which had been raised in 1888.

In 1892 the "partially-paid" infantry absorbed many members of the older infantry reserves. Two years later, it was further strengthened by the absorption of the senior cadets from the public schools. Improvement in organisation and administration were further developed in 1895 - 6, by the addition of an Army Service Corps and Ordnance Store Corps and a Veterinary department to the establishments, and by the elaboration of arrangements necessary to mobilisation for war.

"Volunteers" were again instituted in 1895. The Scottish Rifles, followed by the Irish, the St. George's, and the Australian Rifles, were raised. In 1897 the First Australian Volunteer Horse and the Railway Volunteer Corps were added, as also was a "National Guard," consisting of old volunteers and men who had seen service. In 1899 the Defence Force Rifle Association was incorporated under regulations approved by the Government. In the same year the Railway Corps was disbanded, and in 1900 the Aus Australian Horse came under the "partially-paid" system. The volunteer forces were strengthened during that year by the addition of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles, Civil Service Corps, and Drummoyne Volunteer Company. The Army Nursing Service Reserve was also established in connection with the Army Medical Corps. It consisted of 26 nursing sisters possessing the highest nursing qualifications and training.

The actual strength of the military forces of New South Wales on 31st December, 1900, was 505 officers and 8833 men, made up as shown in table hereinafter. In addition, there were on the same date a reserve with 130 officers and 1908 of other ranks, and civilian rifle clubs with 1906 members.

(iii.) **Victoria.** Soon after separation from New South Wales the war between Russia and the allied forces of England, France, and Turkey led to the formation, in 1854, under the authority of

an Act for volunteer corps in Victoria (18 Vict., No. 7) of the Melbourne Volunteer Rifle Regiment, later known as the Victorian Volunteer Artillery Regiment, with an establishment of 2000 men. In 1860 the volunteers in the colony took over the garrison duties of the Imperial troops, who were ordered to New Zealand, the actual strength in the year named being 4002. Reorganisation was effected in 1863, and two years later the Volunteer Act (28 Vict., No. 266) authorised the raising of a force comprising various arms of the service. On the withdrawal of the detachment of Imperial troops formerly stationed in the colony, the Discipline Act 1870 (34 Vict., No. 389) was enacted, instituting a paid artillery corps. If otherwise eligible, the men of this corps were drafted into the Police and Penal Departments as vacancies arose. In the first four years of the system 190 artillerymen were transferred to the civil branch. From the establishment of the "permanent" force the whole expenditure on military services has been borne by the State.

The "volunteer" force, as originally constituted, comprised cavalry, artillery, engineers, and infantry, with a torpedo and signal corps. At the end of 1871 the "permanent" artillery numbered 119 of all ranks, one only holding a commission. The volunteers and naval brigade consisted of 136 officers and 3663 other ranks, a total of 3799.

The years ensuing saw steady development in military matters. The permanent forces were at all times kept in a high state of efficiency, and the volunteers strove to emulate them in matters of training and discipline. The establishment of both the professional and civil soldiery was gradually increased. Buildings and fortifications were constructed and maintained, garrison and field guns and guns of position were purchased and made available, and the dismounted services were armed with rifles.

In 1876 effect was given to many of the recommendations of a Royal Commission appointed in 1875. Sea and coast defence began to be undertaken, and regular drills and camps of exercise for all arms were instituted shortly afterwards. In the year named the strength of the forces was 3736 of all ranks, including 136 permanent artillery.

Still greater changes in the system of Victorian defence were made in 1883 and 1884. The volunteer force was disbanded, and corps of paid "militia" were raised in lieu and enrolled under the Discipline Act 1883 (47 Vict., No. 777), which came into operation on 3rd December of that year. A large number of the volunteers were drafted into the paid militia, and granted continuity of service. A Ministry of Defence was constituted and a Council of Defence created, a special appropriation of 110,000 pounds a year for five years being made. Officers from the active list of the Imperial navy and army were engaged for terms of service in the colonial forces to carry out the necessary discipline and instruction. The naval force was also considerably augmented. In 1887 the strength was 4189 of all ranks, including 268 permanent soldiers.

In 1890 the laws relating to defences and discipline were consolidated under the Defences and Discipline Act 1890 (54 Vict., No. 1083). This Act formed the principal law under which the forces were maintained until the enactment of the Defence Act 1903 by the Federal Parliament. A further appropriation of 145,000p was, on the expiration of the previous one, provided for naval and military purposes for two and a-half years, viz., from 1st July, 1899, to 31st December, 1901. The engaging of officers from the Imperial navy and army for terms of service was continued. Colonial officers were sent to England for special courses of instruction, and a scheme was arranged, with the consent of Home authorities, for sending selected officers of both arms of the defence force for courses of instruction in the Imperial service. The Admiralty gave permission for officers of the colonial navy to serve on board H.M. on the station, granting acting commissions so as to enable them to undertake responsible duties. The total defence establishment for 1891-2, fixed at 7360, was reduced in 1895 to 4901, but again increased in 1899 to 5885.

Rifle clubs were established in 1833 for the encouragement of rifle practice. Members were allowed to obtain rifles and ammunition at reduced rates, and were given free railway travelling for rifle practice and matches. Shortly after inauguration, the clubs were divided into six districts,

and members in each district were required to meet once a quarter for practice in field firing. An annual allowance was made to the clubs for each effective marksman, the money being devoted to the maintenance of ranges and purchase of ammunition.

The regiment of Mounted Rifles was established in all the districts of Victoria. To cover the cost of uniform, and for incidental expenses, an effective and capitulation allowance was made, and a small payment was granted by way of compensation for attendance at the annual camps of training; otherwise the corps was a "volunteer" one. Certain articles of equipment were furnished by the Government, recruits on being passed into the ranks getting rifles, accoutrements, and horse-gear (except saddle) free. A minimum of twelve daylight drills annually, and a course of musketry, was prescribed for all members, and engagement was for three years with privilege of re-engagement.

An infantry volunteer regiment (the Victorian Rangers) was also raised in extra metropolitan places. Effective and capitulation allowance, and compensation for loss of time by reason of attendance at camp, were granted also to the Rangers.

The outcome of the encouragement of drill and rifle-shooting in the schools was the formation, in the year 1884, of Cadet Corps. These were authorised in any school in detachments of not less than twenty. The Government supplied rifles (principally Prancotte breech-loaders) and provided ammunition at reduced rates. Corps were raised in all districts in the larger schools. Instructors of the militia and volunteers were permitted, in their spare time, to drill the cadets, payment of 2s. 6d. being allowed for each parade. Annual camps, largely attended, were held generally in the spring. In Melbourne, and in the principal inland towns, classes for instruction of cadet officers were conducted, which were regularly availed of by masters and teachers.

To form a link between the school cadets and the militia a battalion of Senior Cadets was established, and consisted chiefly of boys who had left school and engaged in regular occupations in life. All the work was voluntary, and arms and accoutrements were supplied by the Government. An effective allowance was made to assist the boys in the purchase of clothing.

The depression and consequent retrenchment in the last decade of the nineteenth century seriously affected the Defence Department, but efficiency was never sacrificed.

The strength of the Victorian Defence Force on the eve of Federation was as follows:

- Officers, 301; other ranks, 6034; the details being as shown in table hereinafter.

(iv.) **Queensland.** Steps were almost immediately taken, upon the separation of the Colony of Queensland from New South Wales in 1859, to provide for defence. A troop of mounted rifles was raised in March, 1860. The service was voluntary and the force quickly increased, infantry and cavalry, subsequently supplemented by artillery, being formed of "volunteers." Grants for efficiency and a capitulation allowance, with free issue of ammunition, were obtained from the Government; and orders granting fifty acres of land were available upon completion of five consecutive years of service. In 1876 the total strength was 415. The Volunteer Act of 1878 provided for the raising a force for defence, and many citizens entered upon useful and regular training. In 1880 the total strength was 1219 of all ranks.

But the volunteer system here, as elsewhere in Australia, was superseded. In 1883, a Military Committee of Inquiry, appointed to consider the basis of service, reported against the system as lacking in cohesion and discipline, and in 1884 the Volunteer Act was repealed. All male inhabitants within specified ages, and with certain exceptions, were liable to serve. A small permanent corps was authorised, and the formation of partially-paid militia and volunteer corps was provided for. Under the new system the force was greatly augmented, and a higher degree of efficiency was reached. Subsequent legislation crystallised the defence system of the colony. The total strength on 31st December, 1900, was 4028, made up as shown in table hereinafter.

(v.) **South Australia.** The first attempt at military organisation in Adelaide dates back to 1854, when a Militia Act authorised the Governor to call out a force of 2000 men between 16 and 46 years of age. The power however, was not exercised. The Acts of 1859 and 1860 provided for the establishment of volunteer forces, but in 1865 all previous Acts were repealed, and under a new enactment the calling out of not fewer than 540 and not more than 1000 men was authorised, with pay at the rate of Ss. a day. In 1867 the artillery were given a slightly higher rate. In 1877 the possibility of war with Russia acted as a stimulus in defence matters; 1000 men were raised under the existing legislation, and Imperial officers and drill instructors were obtained from England for purposes of instruction, discipline, and organisation.

A National Rifle Association was inaugurated in the following year, and rifle companies were formed. An Act of the year authorised the formation of a small "permanent" force, but it was only in 1882, under an amendment of the Act of 1878 that such force, consisting of one officer and 20 men, was raised. Three years after its formation numbers were augmented.

In 1881 - 2, Acts were passed which allowed the paid volunteers to be raised to a maximum of 1500, and authorised a reserve without limit of numbers. In 1882 the force numbered 1880 - 1680 infantry and 200 artillery.

In 1886, by further legislation, the paid volunteers were styled "militia," the rifle companies became the "volunteer" force, and a militia reserve was also provided for. At the end of 1889 the strength of the "permanent," "militia," and "volunteer" force was 2720 of all ranks. Minor alterations were made in 1890 and 1895.

The strength on 31st December, 1900, was - officers of active and reserve forces, 135; other ranks, 2797, made up as shown in table hereinafter.

(vi.) **Western Australia.** The first "volunteer" force in Western Australia was raised in 1861, under Local Ordinance 25 Vict., No. 3. By the Volunteer Force Regulation Act 1883, the local forces were placed under the military law of Great Britain in time of war, but with certain reservations. In 1889 the "volunteer" force numbered 603 of all ranks. In 1890 an increase in establishment to 712 was made. It consisted then of eight corps, of which two were field artillery and six were infantry. Attached to two of the infantry corps were 60 mounted infantrymen. For each efficient volunteer, a capitulation grant of £1 IOs. per annum was made. To attain efficiency, a volunteer had to attend 12 parades in the year, and complete a musketry course.

Other "volunteer" corps were formed under the provisions of an Act of 1894, and a small unit of "permanent" artillery was added. The "partially-paid" system was introduced in 1896-7. Cadet corps were formed at Perth and Fremantle, and the establishment of the Perth and Fremantle batteries were substantially increased.

Shortly before Federation, a "volunteer" reserve force was formed of persons who had served in the Imperial army, navy, or auxiliary force, or in the military forces of a colony. Six drills a year were required of each member, and an annual allowance of IOs. was made. Membership was restricted to persons under 60 years of age.

The strength of the Western Australian forces on 31st December, 1900, was - 135 officers and 2561 other ranks, the details being as shown in table hereinafter.

(vii.) **Tasmania.** Leaving out of consideration the presence of British military detachments during the early days of Tasmania, no really military local force was organised till 1859, when two batteries of "volunteer" artillery, and twelve companies of "volunteer" infantry were raised. In 1867 the infantry companies were disbanded, and the artillery increased by one battery.

The withdrawal of the Imperial force in 1870, and the simultaneous withdrawal of the volunteer vote, left the colony totally destitute of defence. It was not till 1878 that a remedy was applied, another "volunteer" force being enrolled in that year. In 1882 the strength of this force was 634 of all ranks.

Active forces, of a strength not exceeding 1200 in time of peace, were authorised under an Act of 1885, the services of existing volunteer corps being retained.

Eight years later, an additional "auxiliary" force of a total peace strength of 1500 was authorised.

At the end of 1896 the total strength of the Tasmanian force was 1399, of whom 966 belonged to the "auxiliary" force, and about 200 to the Tasmanian and Launceston Rifle Regiments.

Consolidation of these three units was effected in 1898, the new corps consisting of three battalions, forming the Tasmanian Infantry Regiment.

The strength on 31st December, 1900, was - 113 officers and 1911 of other ranks, made up as shown in table hereinafter.

(viii.) **Defence Works and Fortifications.** Fortifications have been erected for the defence of the principal coast cities of the States, and, in the case particularly of Sydney and Melbourne, heavy armaments have been erected at the port entrances and other points of vantage. It is difficult to determine the total cost of defence works. Large sums have been spent out of loans in each State except Western Australia, but from 1872 to 1899 Victoria did not expend loan moneys on defence construction.

(ix.) **Fortification of Strategic Points.** For some time prior to 1890 the necessity of fortifying certain points on the Australian coast, at the joint expense of the colonies, was considered. Important trade routes are commanded by Albany, on King George's Sound, in Western Australia, and by Thursday Island, in Torres Strait. Hobart and Port Darwin were also regarded as strategic ports which should be fortified. As the result of a military commission, appointed by the Imperial and the different Australian Governments, which visited the places named, defences were erected at King George's Sound, one-fourth of the cost being borne by Western Australia, the remaining three-fourths by New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia, on a population basis. Equipment was supplied by the Imperial Government, and Western Australia provided the garrison and exercised general superintendence. Fortifications at Thursday Island were also erected, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia contributing to the cost of maintenance according to their respective populations. Owing to the formation of a harbour at Fremantle, the Imperial authorities now consider it should be the only fortified port in Western Australia. The whole question of fortification and rearmament is being considered by the Commonwealth Government

(x.) **Summary.** The earliest settlements in Australia were made by British officers in charge of transported convicts, in the oversight of whom they were assisted by detachments of Imperial troops. The forces who were sent from the centre of Government to maintain order and discipline in the outlying parts of the Empire, were either specially raised and enlisted for the purpose, as in the case of the New South Wales corps or were sent to their colonial destinations in the ordinary routine of their military service. Prior to the withdrawal of the last British troops from Australia, attempts had been made to organise local forces on a volunteer basis. In 1854 an effort was made which evinced considerable determination on the part of the colonists - engendered, evidently, by the fear of aggression likely to result from the Russian war. But the cessation of hostilities removed the cause for anxiety, and the volunteer movement seems to have passed into abeyance. Even in these early years, however, the need for a Federal system of defence was recognised by the thinking men of the community, and at last the federation of the Australian States - with its eminent advantages for effective defence - was consummated. In the sixties the

Continental wars kept before statesmen the need of preparation for war, and the fact that in Australia the position of affairs was neither unobserved nor misunderstood is shown by the raising - this time on a more lasting basis - of a volunteer force. Again, too, there was a determined effort to federalise defence, culminating in the proposals of 1870. In the year named, the Franco-German war, and the withdrawal of the last Imperial regiment from Australia, resulted in a definite basis for colonial defence being settled. Small detachments of permanent soldiery were instituted, to act generally as a nucleus about which the citizen soldiery should be shaped, and, generally, to look after the forts and defence works, which had then begun to be erected. The volunteer movement was enthusiastically taken up; many loyal colonists devoted their leisure to drill and training. No payment was made for loss of time, but arms and accoutrements, and sometimes uniforms, were furnished by Government. Reward for five years' service frequently took the shape of grants of land. In 1877 the possibility of another Russian war gave a stimulus to the movement, and establishments were increased. A few years later, as the result of rumours of war, consequent upon French activity in the New Hebrides, and of the reports of highly-qualified military experts who were specially employed to report on the condition of the defences, the "volunteer system" was abandoned, and the "militia," or "partially-paid" forces were brought into existence. The move towards federation is again noticeable, a very important convention being held in 1881. It was held that the "volunteer" system had failed. While many zealous men gave their whole energies to their training, some joined apparently without serious motive, and consequently failed to acquire those essential ideas of discipline necessary no less in citizen than in professional soldiery. Citizen forces were not thereby doomed, however, for the provision of a small annual allowance - generally £10 or £12 for the gunner or private, with a sliding scale for higher ranks - together with arms, accoutrements, ammunition, and all military necessities, free, enabled the "militia" system to be inaugurated, and as it was begun, so practically it has remained to the present day. Reductions in the above rates of pay were found to be necessary, and the lower rates have been continued under the Federal Government. "Volunteer" corps have again been raised, and the "permanent" forces have been continued in the Public Service.

(xi.) **Strength of States' Defence Forces immediately prior to Federation.** The establishment and strength of the military forces of the several States on 31st December, 1900, immediately prior to federation, was as follows, cadets, reservists, and rifle club members being excluded.

ESTABLISHMENT AND STRENGTH OF MILITARY FORCES OF STATES, 31ST DECEMBER, 1900.

State.	Establishment.		Strength.	
	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Officers.	Other Ranks.
New South Wales	549	9,295	505	8,833
Victoria	394	6,050	301	6,034
Queensland	810	5,035	291	3,737
South Australia	141	2,847	135	2,797
Western Australia	140	2,553	135	2,561
Tasmania	131	2,605	113	1,911
Commonwealth	1,665	28,385	1,480	25,873

The strength of the various arms is shown in the following table, permanent being distinguished from "militia," or "partially-paid," and "volunteers": -

Arms	NSW	Vic.	Qld.	S.A	WA	Tas.	Total
------	-----	------	------	-----	----	------	-------

	Officers	Other	Officers	Other	Officers	Other	Officers	Other	Officers	Other	Officers	Other	Officers	Other
	ranks		ranks		ranks		ranks		ranks		ranks		ranks	
Permanent Staff	19	98	14	58	15	57	14	5	2	8	3	9	67	235
Field and Garrison Artillery	18	429	12	272	7	214	1	23	2	31	-	15	40	984
Engineers and Other units	5	70	1	32	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	8	104
Militia and Volunteer - Cavalry and Mounted Rifles	88	1,695	52	1,033	53	741	33	621	32	799	5	91	263	4,980
Field Artillery	10	121	14	277	13	138	4	101	12	174	-	-	53	811
Garrison Artillery	27	441	37	901	17	212	9	165	2	66	13	197	105	1,982
Infantry	242	5,382	136	3,193	145	2,189	58	1,786	71	1,451	83	1,549	735	15,550
Engineers and Other Units	96	597	35	268	41	186	16	96	12	30	9	50	209	1,227
Total	505	8,833	301	6,034	291	3,737	135	2,797	135	2,561	113	1,911	1,480	25,873

2. LAND DEFENCE OF FEDERATED AUSTRALIA

(i.) **Assumption of Control by Commonwealth.** The Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act of 1900 empowered the Commonwealth to legislate with respect to "the naval and military defence of the "Commonwealth and of the several States, and the control of the forces to execute and "maintain the laws of the Commonwealth," and vested the command-in-chief of the Commonwealth forces in the Governor-General, authorising him to proclaim a date, after the establishment of the Commonwealth, for the transference of the Defence Department from each State. This transfer was effected in March, 1901, when the State Ministry for Defence, one of the seven departments of the Executive Council of the federation, took over the control of the whole of the forces of the States.

(ii.) **The System of Administration.** Up to 12th January, 1905, the administration of the Commonwealth military forces was by means of a general officer commanding and a headquarters staff. On the date named, a Council of Defence, to deal with questions of policy, and a Military Board, to supervise the administration of the forces, were constituted. The main objects aimed at under the new system are (1) to establish continuity in defence policy; (2) to maintain a continuous connection between parliamentary responsibility and the control and development of the defence forces, the Minister being in constant and effective touch with his department; (3) to establish continuity of administrative methods by the creation of a continuous board; (4) the separation of administration from executive command, so as to develop the independence of district commands, and by giving scope to independent thought and initiative, make practicable a larger measure of decentralisation, and, more particularly, to make possible the ultimate development of a citizen force; (5) to maintain, on a uniform basis, the efficiency of the forces, by continuous and searching inspection by, and independent report from, an officer who, as Inspector-General, is appointed to report upon the results of the administration of the forces, the efficiency of the troops, the system of training, the equipment, the preparedness for war, and the state and condition of all defence works.

The Military system of the Commonwealth is made up of -

(a) Permanent forces which include
Administrative and Instructional Staff.

The Royal Administrative Artillery Regiment.
 Small detachments of -
 Royal Australian Engineers.
 Australian Army Medical Corps.
 Australian Army Service Corps.
 (b) Citizen Forces, comprising
 Militia Forces of all arms.
 Volunteer Forces (infantry).
 Reserve Forces

The Royal Australian Artillery Regiment practically provides the garrison for certain naval strategic positions and other defended ports, and maintains the forts, guns, stores, and equipment in connection therewith. The other permanent detachments are to form a nucleus, each in its own arm, for instruction and administration of the citizen forces.

The forces of the Commonwealth are organised into -

- (a) Field Force
- (b) Garrison Troops.

The field force consists of five Light Horse brigades, two infantry brigades, and four mixed brigades, and its duties are to undertake the defence of the Commonwealth as a whole, and to act as reserve to the garrison troops. The garrison troops find the necessary garrisons for the defended ports.

The reserves consist of (a) officers who, having passed through a certain period or course of training, have retired from active service, and (b) members of rifle clubs, attested under the Defence Acts. Rifle club members are required each year to fire a prescribed musketry course, a capitulation allowance being paid to clubs for each member classed as efficient. Rifle clubs would furnish a means of bringing the active forces up to war strength in time of national emergency.

(iii.) **The Military Forces under the Federation.** The position of the military forces under the Commonwealth is shown in the following table: -

STRENGTH OF MILITARY FORCES, 1901 to 1908.

State.	1901 *1/3/01	1902 1/8/02	1903 30/6/03	1904 30/6/04	1905 30/6/05	1906 30/6/06	1907 30/6/07	1908 30/6/08
Commonwealth Headquarters	-	26	25	26	23	21	21	t26
NSW	9,772	9,350	8,190	7,285	7,450	7,641	7,501	7,665
Victoria	7,011	6,771	6,070	5,734	5,858	6,146	6,235	6,568
Queensland	4,310	3,199	2,889	2,830	2,877	3,011	2,979	3,176
South Australia	2,956	2,214	1,911	1,699	1,842	1,962	1,888	1,935
Western Australia	2,283	1,845	1,469	1,254	1,235	1,522	1,625	1,611
Tasmania	2,554	2,199	1,850	1,052	1,214	1,645	1,662	1,650
Total	28,886	25,604	22,404	19,880	20,499	21,948	21,911	22,631

* Date of Commonwealth taking over the military forces from States.

Includes Headquarters Australian Intelligence Corps (Militia), numbering 3.

(iv.) **Strength of the Various Arms.** The numbers of the different arms of the service on the 30th June, 1908, were as follows: -

ARMS OF THE COMMONWEALTH DEFENCE, 1908.

Militia Staff	41	Army Service Corps	288
Light Horse	5,062	Army Medical Corps	618

Field Artillery	1,216	Army Nursing Service	90
Garrison Artillery	2,189	Veterinary Dept.	12
Engineers	757	Ordnance Dept.	151
Infantry	11,568	Administrative and Instructional Staff	307
Intelligence Corps	11	Pay Department, Rifle Ranges, Rifle Clubs, Officers, etc.	57
Corps of Signallers	264	Grand Total	22,631

(v.) **Classification of Land Forces.** The following table shows the classification and strength of the land forces in each State, including rifle clubs and cadets, on the 30th June, 1908.

CLASSIFICATION OF LAND FORCES, 1908

Branch of Service	Central Administration	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania	Total
Permanently employed	23	504	413	261	63	69	46	1,379
Militia	3	5,244	4,998	2,751	1,312	909	937	16,154
Volunteers	-	1,917	1,157	164	560	633	667	5,098
Rifle Clubs	-	12,640	21,775	6,225	4,186	4,344	1,205	50,375
Cadets	-	8,244	10,231	4,644	2,428	2,139	1,505	29,191
Unattached	-	53	118	60	44	20	41	336
List of Officers								
Reserve of Officers	-	168	124	104	32	12	13	453
Chaplains	-	28	27	13	4	18	10	100
Grand Total	26	28,798	38,843	14,222	8,629	8,144	4,424	103,086

This page last updated 23 November 2012

© Commonwealth of Australia

All data and other material produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) constitutes Commonwealth copyright administered by the ABS. The ABS reserves the right to set out the terms and conditions for the use of such material. Unless otherwise noted, all material on this website – except the ABS logo, the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, and any material protected by a trade mark – is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 Australia licence